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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000404

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH PROFESSOR RECEIVES MULTIPLE DEATH THREATS  
FOLLOWING DINK ASSASSINATION

REF: A. 06 ANKARA 786  
1B. 06 ANKARA 2667  
1C. ANKARA 0277

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4(b),(d)

1.(C) Summary. Controversial Turkish professor Baskin Oran told us that the GOT provided him security, albeit belatedly, after he received multiple death threats in the wake of the January 19 murder of Hrant Dink. Oran became an early target of rising nationalism in Turkey when he was prosecuted in 2004 for writing a GOT-sponsored report that recommended Turkey improve the rights of its non-Muslims. The steady stream of threats has increased with the rise in nationalism throughout Turkey (reftel C), which he attributes mainly to traditional elites' fear of losing power as Turkey transitions from nation-state to true democracy. While all political parties have stoked the nationalist fire, Oran labeled the divisive ultranationalist agenda of the main opposition People's Republican Party (CHP) as the gravest threat to stability. Turkey may be able to turn the tide of rising nationalism, he said, but only if PM Erdogan foregoes the presidency and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) wins a sound parliamentary majority in fall elections. While Oran may be overstating CHP's role in fomenting ultranationalist sentiment, many share his concern that no one is tamping down the furor. End summary.

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Death Threats Lead to Police Protection  
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2.(SBU) Retired Ankara University professor Oran rose to national attention when he and his colleague professor Ibrahim Kaboglu were prosecuted for inciting hatred and enmity and denigrating "Turkish identity" by recommending in a 2004 GOT-solicited report nt improve the rights oth were acquitted.

3.(SBQ) Turkish authorities assigned police protection to Oran after he received multiple death threats in the wake of the January 19 assassination of Turkish-Armenian author Hrant Dink by an ultranationalist youth. Oran told us that the GOT negligently delayed in providing him protection. (Note: Although Oran claimed he did not solicit protection from the GOT, he filed a complaint with the Ministry of Justice when it did not assign him security, and also argued in an editorial that the state has an obligation to protect its citizens without waiting for them ask. End note.)

4.(SBU) Oran said the one on-call police officer whom he calls to accompany him when he leaves his home has limited effect. The police should focus on aggressively pursuing leads on the steady stream of email, fax, and telephone threats he receives. In his view, Turkish security authorities have created an environment of impunity for his harassers by failing to trace a list of Istanbul telephone numbers from which he had received death threats.

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Wave of Nationalism Becomes a Tsunami  
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5.(SBU) Oran told us the 2004 incident was the first sign of a building wave of nationalist reaction from traditional elites who felt threatened by the accelerated pace of Turkey's transition from nation-state to democracy under the auspices of its EU candidacy. Other factors turned the wave into a tsunami: the re-emergence of PKK terror in 2005-2006; the EU's unfair treatment of Turkey, epitomized by its acceptance of Cyprus into the Union; and the growing strength of the KRG in northern Iraq.

6.(SBU) Oran calls the current nationalism "street fascism"  
-- separate individuals with no leader or unifying ideology

ANKARA 00000404 002 OF 002

acting out violently. The GOT is guilty of creating an atmosphere of impunity where individuals who partake in lynch-mob activities, issue death threats, or run websites filled with hate speech are not held accountable.

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Parties Stoe Nationalistic Sentiment for Political Gain  
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7.(SBU) CHP, traditionally Turkey's social-democratic party, is doing more to stoke nationalist sentiment than other parties, Oran told us, labeling Deniz Baykal, its leader, an opportunistic politician who will pursue any ideology to capture what he sees as his historic chance to ride the wave of nationalism to power. Many voters view CHP as the party of Ataturk, and will support it regardless of its public pronouncements, according to Oran. Other parties, including AKP, are attempting to capture their share of the nationalist vote but are much less dangerous. Devlet Bahceli, leader of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), is more rational than Baykal, and AKP, a party of "peasants", has moved beyond its Islamist beliefs, which are evident in April; the AKP wins a clear majoritive ultranationalist agenda; and the business community and civil society continue to push for democratic reform. Absent the convergence of these events, he believes nationalism would slowly strangle the country.

9.(C) Comment: Though retired, Oran actively and vociferously participates in debates on human rights reform in Turkey, lectures, and produces a website. He is highly respected by human rights observers, diplomats, and many GOT officials alike for his outspoken honesty, passion, and courage. Hrant Dink's murder is tragic proof that Oran's security fears are well-founded, particularly in the heated and uncertain atmosphere leading up to the presidential election. While Oran may be overstating CHP's role in fomenting ultranationalist sentiment, his concern that no one is tamping down the furor is shared by many. End comment.

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